

REMARKS

Claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled. Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to clarify the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claims 1-2 and 5-30 are pending.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 1 and 12 have been amended in a manner believed to overcome the Examiner's rejection of that Claim under 35 U.S.C. §101. Claims 2 and 5-11 depend from Claim 1 and their rejections under 35 U.S.C. §101 are therefore also believed to have been overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Blalock et al. (Pub. No. 2001/0047284) in view of Sheth (Pub. No. 2001/0032170). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

On page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that “Blalock does not explicitly teach, subset known to each bidder within the subset.” The Examiner then states that Sheth “teaches the option of allowing vendors of the created subset to view other bids (Sheth paragraph [0090]).” Independent Claims 1, 12, 13, and 22 do not recite “subset known to each bidder within the subset,” as suggested by the Examiner on page 5 of the Office Action or “allowing vendors of the created subset to view other bids,” also as suggested by the Examiner on page 5 of the Office Action. Instead, Claims 1, 12, 13, and 22 recite that a “first **identifier** is unknown to bidders in the second subset” and that a “second **identifier** is unknown to bidders in the first subset.” As neither Blalock, nor Sheth, whether considered individually or in combination, discloses that the first identifier is unknown to bidders in the second subset and that the second identifier is unknown to bidders in the first subset, independent Claims 1, 12, 13, and 22 are believed to be allowable.

Claims 2 and 5-11 are dependent from Claim 1 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

Claims 14-21 are dependent from Claim 13 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

Claims 23-30 are dependent from Claim 22 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

The foregoing amendments are not to be taken as an admission of unpatentability of any of the claims prior to the amendments.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested based on the preceding remarks. If at any time the Examiner believes that an interview would be helpful, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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